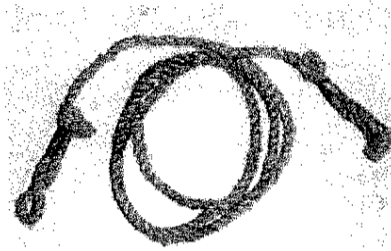


The Ripline



Newsletter of the Bristol University Hot Air Ballooning Society
www.buhabs.org

Issue 4 2005/2006

Well this is certainly a bumper issue for you! With so much going on and a lot to look forward to we have even had to leave out some of our recent ballooning adventures. With this extended issue we have the pleasure of introducing Eric, BUHABS 6th balloon, named in honour of the Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University who we have to thank for this latest acquisition. The sexy new van could also not go unmentioned (for which thanks go to the Alumni Foundation)! Along with all our lovely shiny new kit we have also found some fresh blood for the committee (not in a vampiric way you understand), who were recently elected at the BUHABS AGM.

In this issue we also step back into the mists of time in a mystic, exciting and somewhat pungent way, celebrating 20-years of BUHABS fun. Historic!

Good luck in your exams. You will notice that this issue has not been assembled by poor Mr. Semple who has decided to spend more time with his chemistry. But on behalf of everyone I would like to thank him for the entertaining Riplines he has produced this year up to now.

I will stop whittling on now as I am off to Cardiff to see G4. Just to say the flying season is well underway now and there is no better way to celebrate the end of the academic year and the start of summer than with a flight over the beautiful countryside. Keep signing up the lovely weather is on its way...

Ellie

Some piccies from recent flights (can you spot yourself?)



RECENT FLIGHTS

* FRIDAY 28th APRIL

Bath Railway Field to Leighton

Pilot: Ellie Fearon

In the Air: Nicola Hetherington, Hannah Steer, Phil Richards

Retrieve: Richard Edwards, Phil Hooper

* SATURDAY 29th APRIL (pm)

Bath Railway Field to Leighton

Pilot: Jeremy Hinton & Rhod Watkins (PUT)

In the Air: Dave Shatford, Matt Wallis

Retrieve: Richard Edwards, Zanna Clay

* SATURDAY 29th APRIL (pm)

Bath Railway Field to Leighton

Pilot: Ellie Fearon

In the Air: Katy Austin, Emily Gould, Nick Parkinson

Retrieve: Nicola Hetherington, Phil Hooper



* SUNDAY 30th APRIL

Bath Railway Field to Leighton

Pilot: Tim Dudman

In the Air: Rachel Dudman, Zanna Clay, Amy Crees

Retrieve: Phil Richards, Hannah Steer

Flight Review from the Bath Balloon Fiesta

By Rhodri Watkins

After an early start, we all met at the union and headed off to Bath. This was the first morning of the Bath Balloon Fiesta and we were not only getting to fly with lots of other balloons, but also to fly from right in the centre of Bath. Arriving on the field we found about 20 other balloons in various stages of assembly so we picked a nice spot and started setting up ours. When ready, we then had to wait before inflating the balloon so as not to disturb the local residents too early in the morning. We were given the go ahead to inflate around 7am and got into the air about 15 minutes later. We took off and slowly and rose up out of Bath giving us absolutely fantastic views of all the other balloons taking off and also the city itself.

Once clear of the city it was now time to play. As this was a training flight for me I had to practise landings as we flew over open countryside. This involves getting the bottom of the basket to below 10ft above a chosen field under control in such a manner that I could land there if I wanted to. After a couple of successful ups and downs (and perhaps a bit of unintentional ground contact), we then decided it was time to find a landing site. We found a nice field in Faulkland and had a nice solid landing. After speaking to the lovely friendly farmer who owned the field, we packed away the balloon and headed back to Bristol with the rest of the day ahead of us.

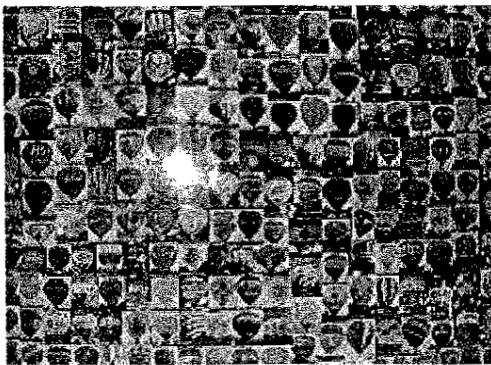
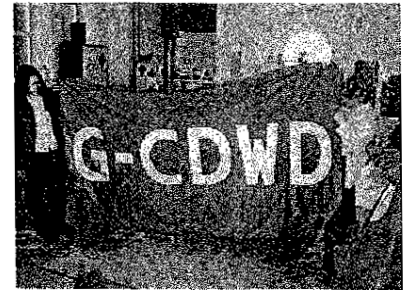
INTRODUCING OUR BRAND NEW BALLOON!!!

From the Factory Floor...

BUHABS trip to Cameron Balloons

By Dr. Jenkins

A few weeks before the official launch of the new balloon a small group of BUHABS members went for a tour of the Cameron Balloons factory in Bedminster. The committee was planning a surprise unveiling of the new balloon but within minutes of arrival our guide told us we would shortly be seeing our balloon half way through manufacture!! Oh well.



The tour began with a look at the picture boards. Camerons test inflate every balloon they manufacture and take a photograph. There are literally thousands of pictures of balloons on the factory walls, a fascinating look at the Company history with lots of unusual special shapes.

We walked on through to the main production room and saw two balloons being sewn together using machines not much larger than ones you would find at home. Rolls of fabric lined the walls all colours of the rainbow including

Phil's favourite – pink.

Artwork and special shaped panels are cut out using a computer-controlled knife. The fabric is rolled out on a special table and the knife (a bit like a rotating pizza cutter) passes over. It's rather like a large computer plotter. Shapes are cut out in seconds, which would have taken an age by hand. To ease assembly pieces are placed in numbered pigeonholes after cutting and then bagged up for production.

Moving onwards we found fans, burners, tanks and baskets. Some parts are made on site and others are bought in. There were some huge commercial baskets far larger than the one belonging to BUHABS. Most of the balloons made here are for commercial rather than private use and most of the equipment on view was larger than ours.



Next we found more sewing and pieces of red fabric which looked suspiciously like the University balloon. The writing and artwork had been cut out and was being sewn together to make the large panels. Once finished these smaller panels would be joined together to form larger and larger pieces until the final balloon is completed. We managed to find the University logo and registration.

Upstairs we found yet more sewing and balloons being assembled and repaired and rigging of the parachutes. The parachute sits in the top of the balloon and can be pulled in flight to let hot air out of the balloon. It is also used for the final deflation after landing. All the rigging lines need to be measured the same length to ensure the parachute sits centrally in the top of the balloon.



Not all of the balloons are destined for the UK. A large number end up abroad for both companies offering balloon flights to tourists and to private pilots flying for fun. It seems like ballooning is as popular as ever.

If you missed out on the factory tour there are lots of pictures on the BUHABS Website (www.buhabs.org and follow the links for the gallery). Camerons open their doors for tours every once in a while so if you are interested speak to member of the committee and we'll find out when you can go and visit.



To the Skies... BUHABS-6 Maiden Flight

By Phil Hooper

It was the moment we'd all been waiting for. The date was set for Saturday 6th May 2006. The weather didn't look promising on the Friday evening, so as it was Lee Hooper's (previous BUHABS pilot) birthday, I continued to get increasingly intoxicated. It came to the point of phoning in at 10:30pm, Nicola managed to get through and found out that it was indeed flyable. This meant some thinking had to be done – 1) carry on drinking and deal with it tomorrow or 2) go now so you can get a decent night's sleep and be raring to go in the morning. It just had to be option 1.

After many, many more drinks and lots of pole dancing in Vibes, most people had wandered off into the night to get some sleep. I decided it was time to get some food and then wander home. After a few more drinks and drunken goodbyes I finally got to my house at 4am. We were due to meet at 5:30am. This was just enough time to have a shower and sober up (slightly) with some coffee and more munchies.



The plan was to pick up Nicola and Ellie (fellow drunkards) on the way to the compound. Nicola actually made it downstairs but Ellie made her mind up that her bed was the better option.



We made it to the compound and it was bloody freezing – a sure sign I was sobering up! Our balloon was to have its maiden flight from the Railway field in Bath and not surprisingly, I nodded off for a wee while in the van.

When we arrived I felt absolutely awful, and I wanted to do as little as possible because of this, so I dedicated myself to the mouth – I was waiting for the burners to

come on to warm me up!

The balloon was inflated and we all had a chance to run around the field to take pictures and to film. Feeling not so good I thought it was going to be a lovely retrieve, as I would be able to fall asleep in the back of the van. This wasn't going to happen as Rhodri decided that he would be able to do a solo retrieve. I thought "great" and "bugger" at the same time -- Great because I would be flying on the maiden flight and Bugger because it meant standing up for about an hour!



We finally got into the air and I have never felt so ill in my life, this was about to get even worse as Paul tested everything on the balloon to make sure it was working properly. Hot air balloons have something called Spin Vents – basically a pilot pulls a rope to make the balloon spin in a certain direction so you don't have to keep swapping places in the basket. As this was a new balloon these worked a bit too well for my liking. It's like when you finally get in from a night out, lie on your bed and the whole room is spinning – but times that by 10 and you will feel how I felt. I did almost throw up over the basket! Then Paul tested the other one – urgh!

After an hour we landed in a place called Codrington. It was a lovely flight and the balloon looks brilliant. The best bit is what came next – breakfast!!! I enjoyed a massive bacon, sausage and egg buttie on the Downs; this is what sobered me up.

I finally got to sleep at 3pm that day!

Our website now has hundreds of new photos online from the weekend of fun we had to celebrate our new balloon.

Launch from Royal Fort Garden

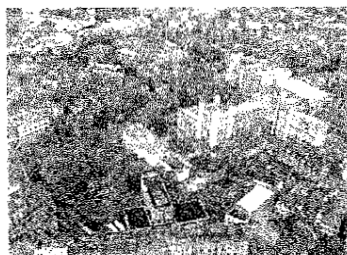
By Carolyn Buchanan



As part of the launch of Eric – BUHABS 6 – a tether was arranged in Royal Fort Gardens to show the lovely new bright red balloon to the Vice Chancellor and get some official photos taken for the University. So, early one Tuesday morning a few of us gathered in the unusually small launch site and waited for the balloon to arrive. As we set up, Royal Fort Garden's resident mangy fox turned up to do his part. He tugged some ropes, tested the envelope & refused to be sent away; no matter how hard we tried.

The balloon was tethered to two trees, as it wasn't certain at first whether we would fly on and we didn't want to take off before the Vice Chancellor could have a good look/get his photos. As a launch site, Royal Fort Garden was slightly different to most (in size, buildings and protected vegetation) – there was to be no bumping the basket into the new van; the trees and buildings were strictly off limits. Briefings took place early on, and the final inflation of the balloon and take off were quite quick – Hannah, Nicola & I jumped in; Rhod, Ellie & Amy ran off from the basket as we shot straight upwards.





Flying over the city was amazing, before long it was difficult to work out how we'd managed to take off in an area so completely surrounded by buildings – there was a very good view of the University itself (and the new traffic system by Broadmead). Flying east, behind us we could make out Clifton suspension bridge in the distance, and almost everywhere else was the City – it certainly looks very different from above.

The flight lasted a little under an hour, and Paul brought us down in a playing field near Kingswood. Not only had there been a great view of Bristol, but we also landed upright (a first for me; and a change from that squashed feeling in the drag-landings I'd previously experienced), in a field with an open gate (no carry out for us!) – An excellent flight all round.

BUHABS Historical Line-Up

First a history lesson...



Uvistat I
1986-89



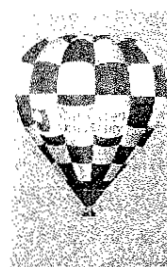
Uvistat II
1989-91



Decora
1991-95



Fiesta
1995-97

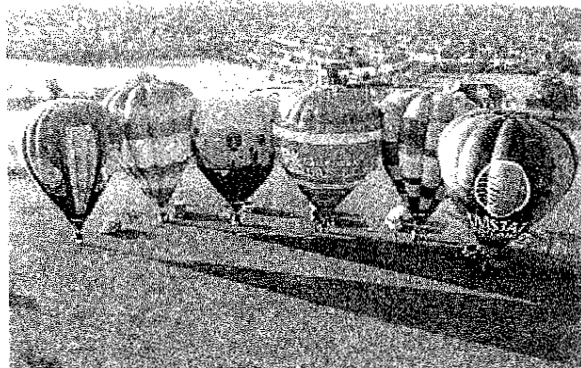


OU/Beneficial
1997-2006

It was clear that someone was on our side when we woke at 4.30am to what would become a beautiful, sunny and calm day, ideal for the much-anticipated BUHABS historical line-up. Joining the strong BUHABS contingent were ex-BUHABS pilots Tony Jay, Robin Corcoran and Lee Hooper with their bottom ends (and baskets and burners ;) !), local pilots Dave Groombridge and Mark Streat and Loughborough University pilot Alan Hardwick and their teams. After laying out, Paul interrupted our game of 'which balloon smells the worst?' to give a safety briefing. For information's sake, UVISTAT-1 won the odour competition hands down!

With that the balloons were inflated and we spent a good part of the next hour admiring their beauty, from above and below. Some of us then managed to avoid some of the packing away by flying Lee's hopper Oscar over the heads of the more hard-working types. Hee hee.

It was great to see so many members there on the day at this very special event. For those who missed this spectacle the pictures are amazing (although not as good as actually being there of course!)



Introducing Your New Committee



President
Elly Betton



Social Secretary
Ellie Fearon & Rhod
Watkins (joint)



Secretary
Nicola BJ Hetherington



Sponsorship Treasurer
Paul Spellward



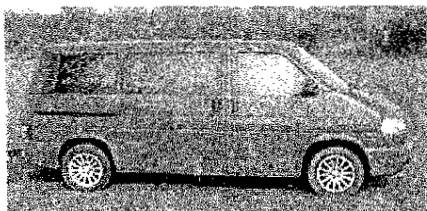
Union Treasurer
Carolyn Buchanon



Transport Officer
Simon Church

The Absolute Joy of Driving the BUHABS van

By Nicola Hetherington



Obviously the main reason most of you will have joined the club is to fly in a hot air balloon. But there is another, very essential, side to every flight we do – the retrieve! And for every flight we do, finding a driver is just as important as finding a pilot or the flight can't go ahead. Being a driver for the club can be really fun – you get to see parts of the West

Country that you could never have dreamt existed! It can be a challenge trying to follow a balloon through the sky, but with experience, you can learn to head in the right general direction, and keep in radio contact with those in the sky. And if all else fails, you can always stay on a main road until the pilot phones with a grid reference!

Driving a big van with a trailer can be a bit daunting if you've only ever driven a small car, but we will give you full training and you won't be pressured into driving on a retrieve until you are completely happy. You don't need a minibus licence as our van doesn't have enough seats to qualify, so all you that's required is that you are 21 or over and are willing and able to drive the vehicle. Personally, I really enjoy seeing the balloon in the sky (a sight you obviously don't see if you're in it!) and it's really fun driving at fiestas when the roads are full of vans with balloon trailers! It's a great way to get more involved in the club as you obviously don't have to pay to come out on the retrieve, and for drivers there's an extra incentive of being able to swap 3 crewing points for a free flight! If you are interested in driving, talk to the pilot when you're out on a flight.

Next Planned Driver Training Day:

Saturday 10th June

Please email the committee [\[redacted\]](#) if you are interested

Reasons to cancel any holidays you may have booked...

1. Member's Fortnight (12th - 23rd June)

Dark, dark times lie ahead for most, but fear not (!) for even when Neighbours no longer cheers you up and a can of red-bull is your only friend you can always fantasise about big red balloons... To celebrate the end of exams, the end of the academic year and the start of the holidays, BUHABS plans to fly not only at the weekends but also during the week for the final fortnight of term. Don't worry if work, etc has prevented you coming out so far, this is the perfect time to enjoy your first ballooning experience! An email will be on its way in the next few weeks detailing how you can sign-up for these flights. Don't miss out!! ☺

(Photos from some of last year's flights can be found on the website).

2. BUHABS 20-year Anniversary Meet (21st-23rd July)

As you may have gathered, this is a very special year for BUHABS. Not only have we got our hands on lots of shiny new kit but it is also our 20th birthday. To celebrate this we are organising our own little balloon meet in July. If you are in Bristol for this weekend it is an event not to be missed. Flights are provisionally planned from Bristol, Bath, the Cotswolds and South Wales with a number of other balloons participating (inc. hopefully other University balloon clubs from around the UK). There will also be some fun flying competitions and some exciting social events. More details will follow by email but ensure that you make a note in your diaries.

3 FOR FREE!

Are you a sociable person who has lots of friends? Are you persuasive? If so we are currently looking for some new members to fill our basket this summer. The incentive for you is that if you find 3 friends to join there is one free flight in it for yourself (or one of the three mates if you a lovely generous person!)

Notices

If you are about to change your postal/email address please let us know so you can continue to receive information about BUHABS flying, events and socials.

Remember if you have been out with BUHABS and want to share your experiences please do not hesitate to contact us via the committee email [REDACTED] We also like to keep our website up-to-date with photos, etc. Please send these to our Webmaster Phil [REDACTED]

